

1898.

## NEW ZEALAND.

## GOVERNMENT VALUATION OF LAND DEPARTMENT.

(REPORT BY THE VALUER-GENERAL.)

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

The VALUER-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

Government Valuation of Land Department,

Wellington, 10th August, 1898.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit figures showing the result of the valuation of the land of the colony recently made under "The Government Valuation of Land Act, 1896."

A comparison of these figures with the results of the assessment made in 1891, and published in Return No. B.—20, 1892, may prove interesting, showing, as it does, the increase which has taken place in New Zealand land-values during the past six years. It should be mentioned that the surface-value only of gold-mines is included, and the value of the Government Railways has *not* been included in the present total valuation of £138,591,347.

It will be seen, on reference to the tables, that the increase in the South Island has not been in the same proportion as in the North Island. This is accounted for by the great spread of settlement within the Wellington and Taranaki Districts, and also, in a measure, by the severe droughts which have been experienced in portions of the South Island. The Wellington and Taranaki valuations have been proved to be the reverse of excessive by sales which have taken place since they were made.

While the general valuation-roll continues in force the valuation-rolls of local authorities rating on either capital or unimproved value are compiled therefrom, but the valuation-rolls of local authorities rating on annual value are not affected. The number of local valuation-rolls issued for boroughs, ridings of counties, road, town, and river districts, &c., where rates are levied on the capital or on the unimproved value, was 926; while no local valuation-rolls were prepared in the cases of 98 local districts, where rates are levied on the annual value, and of 13 (such as Kawhia County, groups of islands, &c.), where no rates are levied.

During the currency of the general valuation-roll, the Department is required to keep the local authorities concerned advised of all alterations affecting the rolls. It is necessary that the rolls should at all times be kept up to date, and form a reliable valuation of the land of the colony. This important work can only be successfully carried out by a competent and energetic staff, and, here, I would draw attention to the fact that, since the sitting of the Assessment Courts, there are on hand a very large number of additions and alterations affecting the rolls, which entail much clerical work, in addition to that of the valuers.

I mention a few of the numerous alterations and amendments affecting the rolls: (1) lands alienated from the Crown; (2) lands sold or leased by owners other than the Crown; (3) changes in tenancy; and (4) valuations, made by the department, for lending purposes, which, when they differ from the original valuation, affect the valuation-rolls, as they must necessarily be more recent.

Lands subdivided in most cases require a fresh valuation, so as to show the new apportionment of improvements and unimproved value.

In any local district where rates are levied on the capital or on the unimproved value, and where there is a Borough Council, County Council which levies a general rate, or a Road or Town Board of a county wherein the County Council does not levy a general rate, the total cost of preparing the rolls (including the expenses of valuations and the annually-recurring expenditure in keeping the valuations and other particulars up to date) will be borne in one-third shares by such local authority, the Land and Income-Tax Department, and the Government Valuation of Land Department respectively; and in any other local district or other portion of the colony the cost will be borne in equal shares by the two departments above named.